

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously presented) A catheter device comprising:
 - a shaft that extends from a proximal end to a distal end to carry on its distal end a medical implant for intraluminal advance on a guidewire and delivery of the medical implant to a treatment site, the shaft defining a flushing lumen and a proximal guidewire exit port that is distal of the proximal end of the shaft for rapid exchange of the catheter with respect to the guidewire;
 - a sheath that lies radially outside the medical implant in the catheter that is proximally withdrawn from the medical implant;
 - a first shaft element including at least one of a pull wire and a rod to pull the sheath proximally; and
 - a second shaft element including a pusher tube to push the medical implant distally to prevent the medical implant from moving proximally with the sheath when the sheath is pulled proximally by the first shaft element.
2. (Previously presented) Catheter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the sheath comprises a tapered distal tip.
3. (Previously presented) Catheter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the pull wire is coupled to the sheath by an inner pull ring located radially inside the sheath, the pull wire and pull ring being both of metal and with a metal bond between the pull wire and the pull ring.

4. (Previously presented) Catheter as claimed in claim 3, further including an outer pull ring radially outside the sheath and the inner pull ring, the sheath being compressed between the inner and outer pull rings.

5. (Previously presented) Catheter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the sheath is polymeric and carries within its wall thickness a braid of metallic filaments.

6. (Previously presented) Catheter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the pusher tube comprises a distal end to which is fixed side-by-side, the-proximal end of a pusher-guider tube that defines a lumen for the guidewire.

7. (Previously presented) Catheter as claimed in claim 6, wherein the pusher-guider tube comprises a spiral metal filament that carries a stopper ring, wherein the second shaft element includes the pusher tube, the pusher-guider tube and the stopper ring.

8. (Previously presented) Catheter as claimed in claim 7, wherein the pusher-guider tube extends distal of the stopper ring to the distal tip of the catheter.

9. (Previously presented) Catheter as claimed in claim 8, further comprising an adaptor block to connect the pusher tube and the pusher-guider tube, the block defining two lumens side-by-side, one for the pusher tube and the other for the pusher-guider tube.

10. (Previously presented) Catheter as claimed in claim 1, further including a flushing sleeve that is contiguous with the sheath and defines a lumen that contains the pusher tube.

11. (Previously presented) Catheter as claimed in claim 10, wherein the shaft includes a guider block that has a cylindrical outside surface to receive the flushing sleeve, a guidewire lumen, and a lumen side-by-side with the guidewire lumen to receive the pusher tube.

12. (Previously presented) Catheter as claimed in claim 11, wherein the flushing sleeve distal of the guider-block includes a bellows tube.

13. (Previously presented) Catheter as claimed in claim 12, wherein the flushing sleeve distal of the guider block includes a telescopic tube.

14. (Previously presented) Catheter as claimed in claim 13, wherein the guider block is fixed against axial movement with respect to the pusher tube and with respect to the flushing sleeve on its cylindrical surface.

15. (Previously presented) Catheter as claimed in claim 14, wherein the proximal guidewire exit port is immediately proximal of the guider block.

16. (Previously presented) Catheter as claimed in claim 15, wherein the guider block is located around 75 cm from the distal tip of the catheter.

17. (Previously presented) Catheter as claimed in claim 15, further including a steering tube that protrudes from the exit port and can be pulled out of the catheter, and wherein the guidewire lumen continues proximally from the exit port to a second more proximal exit port, proximal of the proximal exit port, and wherein the steering tube can be pulled out of the catheter to permit a guidewire to advance proximally beyond the location of the steering tube, as far as the more proximal exit port.

18. (Previously presented) Catheter as claimed in claim 17, wherein the more proximal exit port is defined in a hub that also defines a flushing port for introduction of flushing fluid to the flushing lumen.

19. (Currently amended) Method of manipulating a self-expanding stent comprising:

loading the stent into a rapid exchange transluminal stent delivery catheter system the catheter having:

a shaft that extends from a proximal end to a distal end,

a pull wire to pull the sheath, the pull wire disposed along a majority of its length in a pusher tube that extends from the proximal end to the distal end; and

pulling on a pull wire to pull proximally relative to the stent a sheath that lies radially outside the stent to release the stent.

20. (Canceled).

21. (Currently amended) Method of placing a self-expanding stent comprising: advancing a catheter to a stenting site along a guidewire, the ~~taking a catheter~~ having:

a shaft that extends from a proximal end to a distal end, the shaft defining a flushing lumen and a proximal guidewire exit port,

a sheath that lies radially outside the shaft,

a pull wire to pull the sheath, and

a pusher tube partially disposed in the sheath and housing the pull wire along at least a portion of its length;

~~advancing it to a stenting site along a guidewire;~~

pulling on the pull wire to release the stent; and

withdrawing the catheter and guidewire after release of the stent from the catheter.

22. (New) Catheter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first shaft element is disposed in the second shaft element along at least a portion of its length.